DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

CURBING THE NAVAL ARMS RACE: LIMITATION AND REDUCTION OF NAVAL ARMAMENTS AND EXTENSION OF CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES TO SEAS AND OCEANS

Addendum

CONTENTS

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS ................................................................. 2

Mexico .......................................................... 2

Spain .......................................................... 2

Suriname ..................................................... 3

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ................................. 3
REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

MEXICO

[Original: Spanish]
[1 July 1985]

The Government of Mexico has nothing further to add to the opinion that was forwarded in note 321423 of 21 June 1984. 1/

SPAIN

[Original: Spanish]
[10 June 1985]

It may be recalled that Spain voted in favour of resolution 38/188 G, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to arrange for a group of governmental experts to carry out a comprehensive study on the naval arms race, thereby facilitating the identification of possible areas for disarmament and confidence-building measures. This study, which is now under way, will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fortieth session and will be a suitable basis for considering the matter.

Spain voted against resolution 39/151 I, however, because particular difficulties were encountered in the content of both the preamble and the operative part. The result of the voting on that resolution showed that many delegations encountered the same difficulties.

The Government of Spain thinks that the negotiations mentioned in resolution 39/151 I would be premature, because the reduction of naval armaments is a relatively new and technically complex issue. Furthermore, it would not be appropriate for the United Nations Disarmament Commission to discuss this matter, since that would prejudge the content of the study mentioned above.

1/ A/39/419.
SURINAME

[Original: English]

[3 July 1985]

With regard to the arms race in general and naval arms race in particular, the Republic of Suriname does not carry much weight. The weaponry of the Armed Forces provides only for the necessary need to protect the borders of Suriname in an adequate manner. The Government of Suriname has for the time being no direct proposals with regard to this matter but it subscribes the urgent need to start negotiations as mentioned in resolution 39/151 I.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

[Original: English]

[11 June 1985]

The United Kingdom considers that the adoption of resolution 39/151 I, by a minority of Member States, creates an unfortunate precedent, in both form and substance, for the entire United Nations system.

Resolution 39/151 I invites States Members of the United Nations to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on a set of specific suggestions contained in that resolution and sets a deadline that does not allow Member States to give due consideration to the contents and conclusions of a study now being carried out by a group of naval experts on behalf of the Secretary-General. At the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, a majority of States adopted resolution 38/188 C, which requested the Secretary-General to carry out, with the assistance of governmental experts, a comprehensive study on the naval arms race. The expert group was requested to study naval armed forces and arms systems in order to analyse their possible implications for a wide range of issues. The report of the expert group is due to be transmitted to the General Assembly at its fortieth session. In adopting resolution 39/151 I, which clearly prejudges the outcome of the work of the expert group preparing this study on the naval arms race, the General Assembly appears to be discounting the study group's deliberations. By ignoring the existence of the United Nations study on the naval arms race, the sponsors of resolution 39/151 I have called into question the use of the scarce resources which have been devoted to the expert group's work, at a time when there is growing concern amongst Member States at the duplication of effort which is becoming more and more prevalent in the consideration of arms limitation and disarmament issues within the United Nations system.

Moreover, the unbalanced nature of resolution 39/151 I, which presents only a partial view of the existing global naval balance, fails to give sufficient weight to the legitimate security and economic interests of the Member States concerned.
For these reasons, the United Kingdom indicated, during the 1985 session of the Disarmament Commission, its firm view that it was at best premature, and at worst counter-productive, for the Commission to begin consideration of this issue during its 1985 session. By opening substantive discussion on the issue the Disarmament Commission would have called into question the future course of its own deliberations, and would have cut across the work of the Expert Group on the naval arms race.